



Sam installing solar photovoltaic panels to a house in Bolton

SAM FEATHERSTONE: OVAL RENEWABLES

Why did you get into retrofit?

When I was 16, I worked as an apprentice electrician. Around that time, solar PV was getting popular and my employer teamed up with a plumbing and heating firm to create a renewables company.

I did more and more renewables work and soon caught the bug. I love how it changes – new kit comes out all the time. A standard electricity socket has been the same for years, but solar, batteries and heat pumps can change regularly.

What are the benefits of working in retrofit?

Retrofit and renewables will be around forever – it's a cutting-edge industry. Demand will grow and grow.

I set up my company in 2018 and haven't looked back. We mainly do electric vehicle charging, solar panels and batteries. Although you need to have the right qualifications and training like any industry, we have found that good customer service and high workmanship standards have enabled us to establish our brand.

I also care about cutting carbon emissions. Fitting a solar panel and seeing it generate power from light still fills me with awe!

For some contractors, it's a financial decision, moving into renewables. There's a lot of demand. If you're an electrical contractor, they'll be a point when you can't afford not to do renewables.

In our new contractor case study series, we ask builders, installers and trades how they got into retrofit. Find out about the benefits of working in eco-renovations and how you, too, could make the move.

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PEOPLE POWERED RETROFIT

MY ROUTE TO RETROFIT



Sam began his career as an electrician but now does a range of renewable energy work

Why should other contractors move into retrofit?

When feed-in tariffs came in, suddenly everyone was a solar panel installer. There were so many bodged jobs and we repaired loads of systems because the original companies were no longer running.

We need more contractors in renewables but with the right standards. You have to care about what you leave behind.

There are certain areas, like heat pumps, where we definitely need more contractors. Installation standards are often low in heat pumps, so more people working in the industry will force companies to raise their game.

Renewables is one of the main areas of growth in the electrical industry as there are many problems to be solved with us heading into a carbon neutral future.

How do you find customers?

We regularly get work via Instagram and other social media platforms that we're active on. Customers follow us because they're interested in electric vehicles and new, innovative low carbon technologies. DIYers and some contractors get in touch too, asking if we can recommend training.

That's where People Powered Retrofit can help. They offer online and face to face courses, advice and networking around retrofit. And they're a non-profit organisation – they're doing it to help the industry rather than make money.

Find out more about Sam Featherstone and Oval Renewables at: ovalrenewables.com and on [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Want to work in retrofit? People Powered Retrofit can help. We support contractors to grow their skills and find customers.

Find out more:
retrofit.coop/network or
call 0161 820 1273

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